The
COMMONWEAL

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Inaction

FORTY-SEVEN days ago as we write, President Truman sent to Congress one of the longest messages ever presented to that body. It contained a great variety of recommendations most of which seemed to us wise and even urgently necessary if reconversion from war to peace were to be an orderly process. In forty-seven days precisely how much of this program has been put into effect—or even acted upon?

The question answers itself. In all, Congress has tinkered with the tax laws—an activity always politically pleasant when it involves lowering people's taxbills—and that is just about all. It seems likewise to have closed the door to any broader unemployment compensation, although even here definitive action has not yet been taken. The full employment bill is up in the air. The FEPC is up in the air. The housing program is in the stratosphere. So is the Missouri Valley Authority and any real public works program. Altogether Congress has been very exercised about the atomic bomb (as who has not been?) and it has, through its committees, listened to a lot of people both to good purpose and to no purpose. In view of the appalling seriousness of the situation in which we find ourselves, this is a fiddling record. For although Rome is perhaps not yet in flames, there is plenty of smoke emerging from its buildings.

What is the reason for this constipation? To answer that question properly is very difficult. But clearly the President himself must bear a part of the responsibility. The policies which he has publicly enunciated are good policies, yet he has done little more than enunciate them. His actions are far less encouraging. Thus he has succeeded in eliminating some of the ablest men who had been attracted to public service in Washington; he has replaced them with men with whom little positive fault can be found but whose greatest virtue seems to lie in their political regularity. The result has been to create a very definite atmosphere among the abler people remaining in government service. Most of them are building their bridges to get out before they are fired.

Perhaps one of the most alarming symptoms of Mr. Truman's present mentality is to be found in a recent report from Washington by the World-over Press Service. Here is a significant paragraph: "Recently a delegation representing 48 national organizations called upon the President to urge that he speed help to liberated peoples in time to prevent starvation. The President's attitude during the interview came as a shock to most of the delegation. When the head of the delegation used the word 'starvation,' Truman impatiently substituted the word 'hunger.' He declared that some of the 'hungry' would not do things for themselves but 'wait like birds to be fed,' and, while agreeing that Congress should appropriate more UNRRA funds and credits, said that we are reaching the limit of our ability to help. He admitted that even with new overseas allocations, Europe's food supplies will 'remain below the minimum level of subsistence.' And this in the light of adequate proof that the need is for food not only to sustain life, but to give people the strength to work and rebuild health. Under the Truman program, liberated peoples will receive less food from their liberators than they received from their conquerors."

All this adds up, we greatly fear, to a certain spinelessness which is always the death of strong leadership, and cannot help having its effect on Congress, which has with more or less patience listened to a program of sane and healthy recommendations but which apparently knows that nothing will be done to force implementation of that program. Perhaps we are mistaken in this analysis. We can only hope that we are mistaken, for too little and too late has become a dreary business to watch. Yet we can see no real evidence that our analysis is mistaken, and we are forced to the conclusion that what we as a nation now desperately lack is leadership.

Leadership, of course, is a technique which can be used for any end, for a good end or a bad end. The President's ends would seem to be good; so far he has failed in implementing them. There is grave danger that in this vacuum bad ends may find a new leadership and dismay the world.

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What Scientists Say about It

WITHIN the past week prominent scientists who had to do with developing the atomic bomb gave considerable testimony of the effects of the use of that weapon. We print herewith two of their most arresting observations. Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer, director of atomic research at Los Alamos, N. M., as reported in the New York *Times,* told a Senate committee that "the atomic bomb . . . is something against which no defense is possible, the secret of which is no secret at all to the scientists of other nations. . . . It is not necessary for a nation to be able to produce more or bigger or better bombs but only for it to decide to proceed independently with its own atom bomb program, after which with very few bombs it could put any other nation, our own included, out of action. . . . Actually the advent of atomic power has weakened the military position of the United States."

Dr. Harold C. Urey of the University of Chicago, Nobel prize winner and co-discoverer of heavy water, who likewise worked on the development of the bomb, told a luncheon of scientists in New York that in a war following an atomic bomb race among the nations, according to the *Herald Tribune,* "it seems certain that all the principal cities of the world, including those of the United States, will be utterly destroyed and their inhabitants killed." He further pointed out that if no individual nation had the atomic bomb, the United Nations Organization would not have to have it either. He saw the only hope in absolute prevention of atomic bomb making. "What will be needed is a most efficient inspection service which will detect and report promptly any attempt to produce atomic bombs or other heavy arms, and a sufficient [international] police force to prevent such activities. In this way neither the countries of the world nor the United Nations Organization will have atomic bombs and no one will need to fear them." Meanwhile the American Navy openly goes about its experiments with atomic bombs and announces it will observe the results of such missiles on abandoned enemy ships.

German Rights

ALLIED Occupation Authorities have promulgated a Bill of Rights for the German people, a juridical reform which guarantees, among other good things, the following: "(1) No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without the process of law. (2) Criminal responsibility shall be determined only for offenses provided by law. (3) Determination by any court of any crime 'by analogy' or by so-called 'sound popular instinct' as heretofore provided in the German criminal code is prohibited."

The "good Germans" whom the occupying forces are meeting in Germany, especially those connected with the free professions, have an almost primitive concern for these basic protections. It requires a definite effort of the Anglo-Saxon mind to realize how practical a thing this simple and rudimentary concern can be in the world even of today. To protect a bill of rights, they want also an independent judiciary. The *Times* report indicates the Allies want to give that too: "the promotion of judges would depend on merit and legal qualifications alone." Here, on the surface, is a call for the venerable "unpolitical public servant."

All the above sounds like the solidest, traditional democratic reform, reaching through our own founding fathers, the "glorious Revolution," through the reform movements of the Middle Ages and back to the noblest classic heroes of Rome and Greece. It sounds terribly archaic. And, of course, it is.

The Allies declared, according to the *Times,* that "the courts would operate to administer justice to all 'who accept democratic principles . . .'" How does one tell who accepts democratic principles? In short, those Germans (and whatever other people too!) who gain the benefits of the new Bill of Rights are selected by some process or other built up as the operation goes along. The selection made by the forces most powerful in the neighborhood gives scope for "sound popular instinct" and brings us back to the contemporary world. Nuremburg constitutionalism (both the old laws and the new trials) still seems integrated in contemporary legal reality.

French Elections

IT IS a good thing that they have come, that they have taken place without disorder. The English people had their elections and it was a wonderful thing that they could come immediately out of a long war and have elections, just as it was very fine also that we in America could have our elections while the war was still going on—and no disorder in England, and no disorder here. Some people thought that it would be a long time before the French people could have elections. But other people thought—and they were right—that the French had proved through a long enough history that they cared deeply for liberty. There had been a great many aberrations, there had been periods in which they did not seem to care, but an insistence on liberty had always been underneath (or underground) and for some time in modern history the idea of liberty had been associated with the idea of free elections. Naturally, with the liberation of France from foreign occupation the French went to the polls.

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As a result the will of the nation is clear on at least one point. The French desire a new constitution to replace that which was established in 1875. They have decided that the old constitution of the Third Republic does not work and is not workable. They want to invest the government with more authority; they want a stable government. But they do not want an authoritarian government or any government that is not responsible to the people. They have elected an assembly and charged it with the task of making a plan for a government and when that plan is made they will endorse it or reject it. They have retained for themselves the ultimate decision.

It is a most difficult task. To perform it the French have elected Communists, Socialists and Christian Democrats (MRP) in almost equal numbers, and by an almost equal popular vote. The Radical-Socialists have almost disappeared; a few "moderates" were elected and these are way out of the picture to the Right.

General de Gaulle drew up the questions that were submitted to the French people and he has their answer. This answer is clear on the point that they want a new constitution; the mandate is not clear on any other point. A reason for confusion lies in the great difficulty of knowing precisely who voted for whom and what was in their minds when they voted. The three major parties were elected on programs that are all three of them to the Left. More than thirteen million French voters voted Left. That means that a great many conservatives voted Left; the people who used to elect Radical-Socialists voted Socialist; the Catholics who voted for the Center or for the Right voted Christian-Democrat. Among other people they elected was Georges Bidault, de Gaulle's Foreign Minister, and before the war you could hardly have found anyone less known to the Catholic voter and whose party was less likely to come anywhere near to power.

Under these circumstances it is extremely difficult to know in what degree the vote to the Left was positive—for radical reform—in what degree it was negative—i.e., a vote to hold the Communists in check.

Slowly the permanent intent of the French will become evident. It will be in the Assembly debates rather than in these election returns that we shall know what it is.

Where It's Always Open Season

DO ANY of our readers recall a recent comment in these pages under a title which would put them in mind that "the first tempest in the garden was caused by the snake or devil responsible for the fall of Adam and Eve"? That is what a COMMONWEAL paragraph title has suggested to the Brooklyn *Tablet*. Moreover the October 20 *Tablet* goes on from that charming identification to the following "analysis" of our recent paragraph on Professor Harold Laski, Madison Square Garden and free speech: It is the "product of a soviet"; it is stupid; it betrays "lack of principle"; it embodies the "Nazi technique"; THE COMMONWEAL is corrupt anyway; THE COMMONWEAL offers (of all periodicals claiming to be Catholic) "the sole consolation to the anti-God forces."

Anything left of THE COMMONWEAL after this fusillade? Just in case—the *Tablet's* managing editor in his own "militant," plainly-labeled column goes after his pet abomination, "the liberal Catholic." In describing this horrendous creature he allows his febrile imagination to run riot among all possible disloyalties. Neither the *Tablet* "editorial" nor the column, of course, discusses the subject of THE COMMONWEAL'S comment: freedom of speech about Franco Spain. Nor do they bother to mention our flat disagreement with Laski. Instead, the managing editor mutters in typical fashion—sheer assertion—about his pet aversion's "willingness to compromise or question the Church's authority on faith or morals . . ." To top it off he indulges in the most wishful thinking of the whole fevered diatribe. Evidently he has little confidence in his own aim or the effectiveness of his ammunition. For in the end he resorts to a conjuror's trick; he simply says, of a "liberal Catholic paper" that "there is no such thing." Obviously there cannot be if the word "liberal" is used in his peculiar context. But we shall continue to provide a living denial of the *Tablet's* columnist's tormenting wish every single week.

Salute to a Contemporary

IN THE desperate struggle to get food to starving Europe this winter we welcome a comrade-at-arms. *Politics*, an independent monthly of leftist opinion, is also appealing to its readers to take matters into their own hands. Inaction in the halls of Congress and within American hearts in the face of staggering need has brought forth an appeal to readers which is parallel to our own. Whereas in our October 19 issue we printed a series of names and addresses where life-giving parcels might be sent (4 pounds to Italy and 11 pounds to France, for example), *Politics* urges its own readers to write to its offices at 45 Astor Place, New York City, for addresses of individual European families and shipping instructions. *Politics* says on its front page: "What 'our' Government will not do, we can do. What the state will not do, the individual can do. What will not be done on a big organized scale, can be done on a small personal scale."

Other periodicals take note!

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In Wartime Washington

A publisher finds himself on the War Labor Board

F. V. Morley

IN 1939 I had returned from England to America, and what with a natural preoccupation with the course of war and the normal turmoil of the book-publishing game, those next years were tough. There were many gyrations of agony which I don't like to think of. But what is pertinent here is that in the course of some errand which had taken me to Washington, I happened to run into my old school-friend Burt Oppenheim, completely by accident, in the Washington Station restaurant. Burt is dead now, and I can say without his contradiction that he was a great man. What is the definition of greatness? Well, it is something quite apart from notoriety. It has nothing to do with winning votes in a popularity contest. A man can be in a manner divine and yet unknown to all. But it is also something not controlled by the possessor, but conferred upon him by those receptive to his spirit, by those who feel his restlessness for good, and who admit his power of trespass into their own closely-defended territory. It is something too which transcends death. A great man's good qualities go on. Burt, with his slightly-lopsided spiritual face, his squared up shoulders and his somewhat dragging walk, was at a glance a fellow whom medical men would know to have a bad heart, but the rest of mankind would know to have a good one. Even at school one could foretell that he might have the quality of greatness; in maturity, purged as he was by suffering, you could not fail to feel it. He was so much alive—alive to such a wide range of things; and he cared—he cared with an intensity which made you sit up and take notice, and possibly, though in a lesser way, begin to care a little too.

A dangerous, although delightful, accident, to run into Burt Oppenheim. Burt was a "traitor to his class"—a businessman, who was interested in labor-relations, and who resigned from business to spend the rest of his life, and actually to kill himself through over-work, as a minor civil servant. He was capable of higher office, but he didn't want high office. He had no personal ambition or any other vices through which you could get hold of him. He had no theories to prove, or desire to be the boss, or any vanity of any kind that I could ever discover, unless to expend one's self so fervently for simple things like fairness and efficiency in government be reckoned vanity. For those simple things he cared a lot; as I have said, he died for them; but in any given situation anybody less opinionated, or less "crack-pot," than Burt, I have yet to meet. And a dangerous fellow to meet, because he was in a position to recommend panel members for the public hearings called for under the United States Wage and Hours Act in labor-disputes in depressed industries. Nobody cares to be too much in the eye of the man who can pick you for jury-duty.

After the many years of separation, when we happened to have that chance meeting and had exchanged news, Burt suddenly cocked an eye at me and squared his shoulders and said, "Frank, I'm going to recommend you as a public member on one of these tripartite panels — we have to have members who represent industry, labor, and the public, and of course we have most difficulty in finding representatives of the public — and that's what I think you could do." I told Burt not to be ridiculous, that I had lived abroad for twenty years, that I was busy as a bird-dog with publishing activities, that I knew nothing whatever about government or labor relations and didn't want to learn. "No," said Burt, "that's not a right attitude in the first place; and in the second, so far as doing it, if you're a book-publisher you must be accustomed to dealing with difficult people, and that's the main part." "Don't be silly," said I, as we separated. "Don't be surprised," said Burt.

★

The first panel I served on was concerned with the knitted underwear industry. My business colleagues considered this a great joke, and in a spirit of hilarity voted me the necessary leave of absence. Immediately after Pearl Harbor the National War Labor Board was formed in Washington, and soon after that other panel hearings came very thick and very fast.

In full, the history of the National War Labor Board will never be written. The Board itself was a tripartite body of twelve men, with equal representation for industry, labor, and the public, set up by Executive Order of the President of the United States, and (in the beginning) with the sole duty of making a final determination of all

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labor disputes throughout the country by peaceable means. It had no power except persuasion. That is why the history will never be written. Persuasion—how can you describe it? It is the impress of character. Statistics won't reveal it. The verbal transcript, the famous "record" so faithfully kept by so many faithful recorders—I recall one occasion when the mere keeping of the record threw the recorder into an epileptic fit—that won't reveal it. In the beginning, I doubt if many people expected the War Labor Board, set up so loosely and in itself so powerless, to be able to function as a continuing and effective agency of government, in so tough and turbulent and undisciplined a field as the field of labor disputes. It did function. That is why the history would be worth writing. Yet there is no science or art that I can think of which would make that history recordable.

The Board was a remarkable team of men, and a sufficiently remarkable team of remarkable men can do the impossible; but to say that does not explain it or describe it in detail. So much of the responsibility as any one man could carry should, I consider, be charged to Will Davis for the one central quality, beautifully identified in one of Lloyd Garrison's letters, in the words: "when Will Davis opens the door, faith enters with him." But no more than Burt Oppenheim, could Will Davis define that faith. All he could do was exemplify it. The lack of definition, of description, drove some people almost crazy; others it collected into the firmest kind of loyalty. As the phrase goes, I have been around; I have been places; I have seen occasions; but I have never seen a better team of better men in operation than that War Labor Board team of Davis, Taylor, Graham, Garrison . . . and so on, all the way along. In a democracy, that last phrase is tremendously important: all the way along. I've mentioned only public members. The representatives of industry and labor were fully as important and almost as remarkable. But none of the representatives of industry and labor will protest my greatest sympathy toward the members for the public, because, in that set-up, their votes held the balance of power. Where all the weights were grievous, those of the public members were the heaviest. Where all the seats were hot, theirs were the hottest.

★

I am speaking of the early days of the War Labor Board in Washington, before there came along the later and cumbersome duty of administering the Wage Stabilization program, before the remarkable biological fission (transcending that of the amoeba) into Regional Boards—before all that. I am speaking of the days when, despite the fact that the Board in Washington was supposed to be a sort of Supreme Court in labor-relations rather than an instrument of mediation, there was in actual practice quite a lot of the human fun of mediating a dispute out of existence. That is what I need to refer to, and it will show how anything in the nature of a history of the War Labor Board is out of the question.

A labor dispute is composed of three ingredients—heat, details, background—and so, to cool it off and sort it out before it was brought to the Board for a Board Order—after which it would be up to everyone to tremble, whether the Order would be obeyed—there would be a public hearing. Usually this was a full-dress business, not only the parties being present, but a full tripartite panel, with a panel assistant, recorders, reporters, and anybody else, if interested. Sometimes a public representative would find himself instructed to conduct a hearing as a single Hearings Officer; for this there were probably special reasons—no doubt, when all on my own I found myself hearing the troubles of the Chorus Ladies of America, somebody must have considered it unwise to expose too many people to such danger; and perhaps the same was true when without companions I heard the welders of an unnamed airplane factory, where members of rival unions had developed the habit of bopping each other on the head with hammers. But generally a hearing would be before a three-man panel. All parties would express their views; the panel would then struggle with the merits, and produce a written report and specific recommendations, unanimous or with strong dissents, as the case might be.

It was at this stage, when the disputants were present in person, that the human elements were uppermost, and there was a legitimate temptation for the chairman to obtain, if he could, an all-round agreement which would remove the case from the docket. The later stages of Review, Appeals, and, finally, Board Action, were all more abstract. In my experience of various positions with the Board the job of panel chairman, in the early days, was the most fun. You never knew what was going to turn up. In the little matter of the marine painters (the fellows who paint not seascapes but the actual ships) the lawyers on each side had been arguing technicalities with ten-dollar legal words for something like half an hour, before one of the shop-committee-men, one of the actual painters, leaped to his feet in indignation. He was a short, stout, very redfaced Scotsman, and it was his own lawyer whom he interrupted by banging his big fist on the table and shouting: "Mr. Chairman, the trouble was, the snappers put shenangoes on the boot-tops." I hastily consulted the diagram of persons present, and made some such amiable, inane remark as, "Mr. Maxwell, I'm sure you have a point there if you'll explain it to us." Whereupon he

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banged his fist much more indignantly, and shouted much more angrily at me: "The trouble was, the snappers put shenangoes on the boot-tops!" I had the wit to let it pass, and presently to get the lawyers out of the room on the pretext of drafting some preamble, and by the time they returned we had explored Mr. Maxwell's remarkable statement, and everything was removed from the docket, and henceforth (so far as I know) more or less hunky-dory.*

Fun possibly is not the right word. It isn't altogether fun to hear both sides of a dispute and to have to take a decisive position. I know that representatives of industry frequently felt that public members didn't know what they were doing, and didn't feel any compunction for their victims. I know that representatives of labor frequently acted as if public members should be an innocent, impressionable audience. It was possible to stand the cross-fire only if you were ready to make both sides really cross. Mr. Joseph Vance gave the infallible guide for arbitration: "Be as unfair as you can to 'em all! Make 'em swear at you, one same as t'other! In six weeks they'll be saying, give me Wance for an Arbitrator!"

★

The office of a Mediator is differently defined. As stated by Lord Ackworth, who knew what he was talking about, a Mediator has three qualities. The first is, patience; the second, patience; and the third—more patience.

All that a chairman of a National War Labor Board panel had to do in those early days was very simple—succeed or perish. That much was easy to understand. The rest was a little more difficult. What one was really called upon to exercise, without anybody knowing upon what authority, was judicial capacity, in a realm where there wasn't any law. I don't know how the other chairmen felt, for we were much too busy ever to see each other, but in many, many cases that I handled I was scared stiff. It might be a powder company, it might be surgical instruments; it might be the aircraft industry, or glass, or textiles, or furniture makers. It might be Insurance, it might be Laundries, it might be the Migratory Oil Drillers. It wasn't like an ordinary judicial career, because these were new problems, and there was no precedent whatever. Over these problems we would sit by day and often sit by night, sitting like frogs in the grottoes of the Department of Labor Building. Then, almost welcoming a state of utter loneliness, I would go back to the Willard Hotel; and yet, seeking some way out I would read over those rules drawn up for his private guidance by the great judge Sir Matthew Hale, and by him named *Things Necessary to Be Continually Held in Remembrance*:

> That I rest not on my own understanding or strength, but implore and rest upon the direction and strength of God.
>
> That in the execution of judgment, I carefully lay aside my own passions, and not give way to them, however provoked.
>
> That I be wholly intent upon the business I am about, remitting all cares and thoughts as unseasonable, and interruptions.
>
> That I suffer not myself to be prepossessed with any judgment at all, till the whole business and both parties be heard.
>
> That I be not too rigid in matters purely conscientious, where all the harm is diversity of judgment.
>
> That I be not biased with compassion to the poor, or favor to the rich, in point of justice.
>
> That popular or court applause, or distaste, have no influence in point of distribution of justice.
>
> Not to be solicitous what men will say or think, so long as I keep myself exactly according to the rule of justice.
>
> In criminals that consist merely in words, when no harm ensues, moderation is no injustice.
>
> To abhor all private solicitations, of what kind soever, and by whomsoever, in matters depending.
>
> To be short, and sparing, at meals, that I may be fitter for business.

I know nothing about Sir Matthew Hale except that memorandum, but I have often loved him for those private thoughts. I never succeeded in living up to all of his remembrances, but I did try, and I hope that in a human way he had his lapses too. With Matthew Hale in mind it was easier to present an imperturbable front to a sufficiently vicious quarrel, and at some stage get the sting out of it and if possible to develop a little comedy, for if only the edge of hate and suspicion could be blunted by men laughing together, the chances for a settlement were better. When I say settlement, I don't necessarily mean compromise. I mean clarification. There's an old proverb, good fences make good neighbors. Most of these squabbles began by being fuzzy, and if both parties ran to their lawyers they got fuzzier and fuzzier. Joseph Vance was right. If you could get them both equally mad at Government, the chances were that they'd become friends and

**Snappers,* my impression is, were a kind of under-foremen. *Shenangoes* were workers who were not regulars, but drifters; men who had hot feet, who would work for a few days in Brooklyn, and then drift to Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, Dallas, San Francisco or where-have-you. *Boot-tops* is the (presumably British) phrase for the paint below the water-line, where it changes color. *Hunky-dory* is when you can get a dispute effectively disposed of, and don't have to write a report or hear anything more about it.

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mutually clarify their own issues, and get back to work, and war production would go up. *That* was the over-all objective. Of course there were occasional failures. Out of the first three thousand dispute cases, the Board failed to settle seven. Failures continued in about the same proportion—in other words there were surprisingly few disputes which couldn't in some way or at some time be settled by persuasion. And not inconsiderable was the satisfaction of observing an Army or Navy award for increased output going to some company and union which, at the time when you knew them, had been spending their zeal in fighting each other. . . .

Good Neighbors in Boxcars

A needlessly bungled job

Elizabeth Ann Cooper

IN RECENT WEEKS some slight attention has been paid in the press and government to one of the worst bungled of all our wartime programs, the importation into this country under contract of over 300,000 Mexican citizens to work on our farms and railroads. In neither category has our performance—or the performance of anyone else involved, including the Mexican government—been good; yet it has been so much better with the farm than with the railway workers that this article will deal only with the latter. The agricultural program is of course not over, and the railroads may require Mexican maintenance of way workers for several months more. There are at present about 50,000 Mexicans under contract on our railroads; at peak there were 60,000; in all somewhat under 150,000 have been involved.

These men came to the United States under a solemn agreement between their government and ours, and each individual was given a contract assuring him proper compensation and decent living conditions, comparable to those "enjoyed by domestic workers engaged in the same work in the same region." Sanitary and medical facilities were specifically included. Adequate interpreters were to be supplied. There was some hint of educational advantages.

It is doubtful whether the railroads are particularly to blame for what happened. The project of importing these workers was in itself fraught with great difficulties—differences of language including not only Spanish but a number of Indian dialects; the certainty of vast homesickness—and only by most rigid supervision could it have been kept from degenerating into a mess. No such supervision was provided. Our War Manpower Commission, over-taxed with other matters, did little—in spite of sincere interest shown by some officials down the line. The Mexican government supplied twelve inspectors to check on both farms and railroads—an impossibly small number considering that on the railroads alone there were many hundreds of camps, scattered—often at the most isolated points—over the length and breadth of the country. During the last war a very different set-up had been in effect, with excellent results. When the present program began, it had been suggested that the supervisory job be handled through the International Labor Office, which had the experience to know how to do it, but nothing came of this suggestion and supervision went by the board.

What happened?

Under the double incentive of high pay and improving themselves educationally, thousands of Mexicans signed up. A racket promptly developed in Mexico whereby large fees were exacted to secure contracts, and independently—as far as we know—there seems to have been a criminal slackening of standards in medical examinations. Thus of one contingent of men arriving on the East coast, four percent were in advanced stages of tuberculosis. One man, Vallejo by name, was employed on the Pennsylvania Railroad at Bristol, Pa. Shortly after he arrived, he fell ill of what the camp overseer diagnosed as bronchial pneumonia. Upon his apparent recovery, he returned to work, only to become sick again. This time his illness was diagnosed as a "bad cold." A visitor came upon Vallejo in a state of exhaustion, and took him to another doctor. The final diagnosis, after X-rays were made, was a critical case of tuberculosis. As long as Vallejo had gone unattended, other men in the camp were exposed to the disease.

Once signed up, then, the men were transported at company expense to the hundreds of work camps scattered along the thousands of miles of our railroad rights of way. In a few instances they were supplied with decent lodgings; in the vast majority of cases living conditions were be-

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yond description—and this even within the very shadows of our most advanced communities. In most cases the camps consisted of "remodeled" boxcars standing on sidings. These boxcars were to serve as sleeping quarters, mess and recreation halls. The cars are arranged with double-deck bunks for as many as twenty men, a small shower, one or two toilets (privy style) and three or four lavatories (often less). As one investigator expressed it, the greater part of these cars are held together by "tradition and a peeling coat of paint." They have by all appearances been in use for decades.

Ventilation is, in most cases, poor. As the windows are in the lower half of many of the cars, those men sleeping in the top bunks, beneath the sun-heated roofs, literally steam in warm weather. Furthermore, for weeks and even months on end, those few windows could not be opened since there was no screening.

In many of the camps the men have complained of the inadequacy of their showers. With one shower to a car, all the men cannot bathe and dress between the time they return from the tracks and the time that the cooks serve dinner. Most of the men have built makeshift out-of-door showers of hoses wound around a pipe and aimed downward. There have been cases, however, of men caught showering outside in this manner by the authorities and fined for indecency. In many camps the indoor showers were unsanitary in that most of the dirty water would not drain out properly, finally seeping through the floor of the car. This drainage has given rise to another less obvious but equally serious problem. Besides the water that seeps through to the ground from the showers, there is that thrown from the washtubs and that which runs down the sides of the cars after the men spray the roofs in an effort to counteract the heat within. All of this drainage collects in great stagnant puddles beneath the car—beautiful breeders of mosquitoes and disease.

Place in such an environment men who are thousands of miles from home, for whom adequate interpreters are often not supplied, and who have no specific knowledge of their rights or of the procedures under which to obtain them, and inevitably those men will have festering grievances and will be cheated right and left. That is precisely what has happened and continues to happen.

Take so simple a matter as adequate bedding. In the Metuchen, New Jersey, camp, I was invited to inspect their cars by the men, and was shown the bedding. It was literally filthy. For almost two months it had not been laundered. When the Mexicans arrived at the camp, ample bedding had been provided. But slowly the extra pieces began to disappear. Finally each man had but one pillowcase and two sheets. Unable to stand it any longer, they sent out the top sheets. These never returned. One man attempted to wash his own, but thanks to improper washing facilities, the improvement was only slight.

Other grievances are innumerable.

The contract states that the Mexican national "shall enjoy, as regards occupational diseases and accidents, the same guarantees enjoyed by domestic workers under federal and state legislation in the US." This guarantee is technically kept. But the procedures invloved are not explained to the men. For example, one Fidencio Tolentino Cabanas was employed at laying a new track. He and his comrades were ordered back as a train passed through. An unspiked "fishplate" was flung from under the track by the pounding force of the locomotive and struck Cabanas in the thigh. He was confined to a hospital for nine days. Once discharged from the hospital, he was advised to return to the camp but not to return to work. It was forty-three days from the time he was injured until the doctor finally told him he was well enough to go back on the job. Before that, he had been ordered back to work by lesser officials, and in attempting to obey, he suffered a great deal of pain. Other than the payment of his hospital bill, Fidencio received no compensation. The company explanation of this is that injuries of the sort are handled through a specific claim office. In order to receive compensation, Fidencio had to file his claim at that office. But another phrase from the contract is called to mind: "The Patron agrees that its representatives or agents will inform the Worker at the beginning of his work and as frequently thereafter as may be necessary, using the Spanish language and in an adequate manner, concerning . . . medical attention . . . to which he is entitled . . ." (Provision 3, Individual Work Agreement). Fidencio had no knowledge of the claim office to which he was to apply for compensation. It had never been explained to him.

Unfortunately, Fidencio Cabanas is not an isolated case. He is one of many who have suffered painful, often critical injuries on the job without any compensation whatsoever, and without knowing how to go about getting such compensation. There should be at least a first aid station in every camp, or some satisfactory first aid equipment. Yet men in the Metuchen, New Jersey, camp assured me that the only medical supplies kept on hand were small individual bandages and a bottle of cathartic. No visiting nurse system has been arranged; on many occasions, men from various camps have been forced to resort to private physicians. In so doing, they have lost the advantages of a company doctor, lost time, and furthermore have often been overcharged by the less scrupulous of these practi-

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tioners. One Francisco Garcia Moreno underwent an appendectomy. His hospital bill was $125 and his doctor's bill the same. In another case a Mexican paid $175 to have his tonsils removed.

One of the most constant complaints has been about food. The men naturally are unused to American cooking and do not readily adjust themselves to it. And, until very recently, the quality of the food has often been intolerable. Men from one camp could not eat their dinner because worms were literally crawling over the meat. Men from another camp near Philadelphia took a complete meal to the Mexican consulate and demanded that the officials eat it. It was only thanks to the combined efforts of the Reverend Padre Joaquin de Prada, C.M.F., and the Most Reverend William Griffin, Bishop of Trenton, that the camps in the Trenton area began to improve. Now the food there, at least, is unquestionably better.

Still another grievance lies in the lack of recreational facilities. In view of it, the excellent behavior of the Mexicans, most of them young and vigorous, is unquestionably remarkable. In the Metuchen camp, one of the men motioned me to a car. Half of it was their recreation hall. Inspection proved that only a few people could possibly fit into that room to play games. And the games provided were Chinese checkers and dominoes. When I asked about this, the men said they would rather have more vigorous sports—baseball, basketball, soccer or boxing. And they wanted a radio. Recently they got together and bought one out of their own wages.

Nor has any educational program been arranged. The men are eager to learn English. They carry shabby copies of Spanish-English guides and try earnestly to master a few phrases. But because no definite training is available, they cannot make more than the most elementary progress. Since a knowledge of our language and our country is one of the primary reasons for which they came to the States, their disappointment is understandable.

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And there is the question of pay. The earnings of these workers are subject to the same deductions as any American worker must meet. Another ten percent is deducted immediately from each check and remitted to the Banco del Ahorro Nacional, S. A., in Mexico City. This fund is to constitute a savings account for each worker, and may be claimed either in person or by mail upon each worker's return. But many have complained over the length of time it takes to collect these savings. Furthermore, a number of the men have unwittingly turned over their claims to "brokers" who discount as much as fifty percent of their value.

Other deductions involved are those for time lost through illness, inclement weather, meals, the railroad pension fund—this a rather illogical deduction since the men will probably never receive any benefits from it—medical care, and social security. (Of course no deductions for social security are theoretically permitted. But there has been confusion in the workers' minds on this point and the impression exists that such deductions in fact have been made.) Men working in and about Philadelphia are likewise subject to a municipal income tax. Such deductions drain the men's wages. Checks of fifty or more dollars have on occasion been reduced to as little as five or six.

Additional wages have been lost through unscrupulous timekeepers who have made "errors" in bookkeeping. When protests were made the men were informed that the mistake was made in the office, and it would be corrected in the next pay check. Rarely, almost never, were such corrections made. Other timekeepers and foremen have offered to take care of banking or money orders for Mexicans who did not understand the postal and banking systems in the States. One such gentleman disappeared with over one thousand dollars of the Nationals' money on these pretenses.

In a small post office near Trenton, New Jersey, a boy, with the aid of an interpreter, asked a postal clerk if it would be safe to send ninety dollars in cash to his family. He was assured it was quite safe. The letter eventually reached his wife, but not the money.

Other Nationals have made out money orders for their wives, and as long as three or four months later the money had still to be paid. Frequently postal authorities have refused to pay the wives because of the complications involved in the method of writing out a woman's married name in Spanish.

Nine boys in Metuchen complain that upon their arrival they were set to work laying new tracks. There were eighteen hours of overtime involved for which they did not receive overtime pay. Being entirely new and confused, they did not know how to go about issuing a complaint to the proper officials.

Finally there have been other incidents, tragic and irreparable, such as the death of fourteen men on a New Jersey track. A foreman failed to warn them that a second train was coming from the other direction. Caught between two trains traveling at high speed, all were killed. Similarly, five men lost their lives near Chicago when one steam engine laid such a heavy smoke screen that an express was rendered invisible; it struck the men. Most of their bodies could not be identified. And, incidentally, insurance even in the event of the death of a Mexican is based upon a voluntary agreement by the companies. One hundred and

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thirty dollars funeral expenses are paid by the railroad, and one hundred and fifty dollars are sent to the bereaved family.

One of the most tragic aspects of the situation is the fact that these Mexicans are such excellent workers, conscientious and sincere. Without them our railroads could easily have been paralyzed. Yet they have also encountered racial discrimination, a thing with which they are totally unfamiliar. In some communities, merchants or restaurants refused to deal with them. They have been denied the use of public services. When protests concerning this matter were made, one high Washington official commented that the Mexicans "would get used to it." As a whole they are intelligent, serious men. (Some, like Civilo Ortega, are professional men here in the States to make enough money so they can set themselves up in business when they return.) They came here to know our country, and what the majority of them have come to know is what ignorance, ill-will and selfishness can do to the most exalted principles ever coined.

Admittedly it is rather late in the day to tell this story. Yet we still have time to make some amends for what we—all of us—have inflicted on these citizens of our neighbor to the south. That many of them will be life-long ambassadors of hate we cannot doubt or help. The least we owe them is a thorough airing of the whole bungled mess, preferably before an appropriate committee of the Congress.

Communications

"PAINTING IN THE UNITED STATES"

Sewickley, Pa.

TO the Editors: During the past six years in some parts of the world not even an idea, much less an oil-painting, could cross a frontier, so Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum has had American exhibitions in place of its lustrous international competition. This year's American Exhibition is so important that it would be wrong to regret, too much, what still as yet cannot be.

The show is called simply "Painting in the United States." A good name because even though all the artists exhibiting have American passports, some are such new Americans that they may not think of themselves as American painters but rather as living in and painting in and perhaps loving the United States. This show is all the things we Americans are plus a prophecy of things to come. It is sensitively chosen. All the kinds of painting we have are shown, from the conservative to the radical—one might say from the "tight" to the "loose."

Looking at a picture one should try to see the intention of the artist, his object in painting the picture, then notice how well he carries out his intention. This may not be formula enough for looking at a painting by, say, Stuart Davis, but it is usually helpful. The intentions of our artists are so wildly varied that no common denominator can be found. Some love life, men, women and things; some do not. Thomas Benton, probably our foremost artist, loves life. If we were to assemble some paintings to be put in a capsule for future generations, we would do well to include Wayman Adam's "Old Ford," whose driver is so American one grants full consent, Lewis Bosa's terrifying "Spring-time on Ninth Avenue." Paul Cadmus always thrills and disappoints. He is such a good draftsman (his own self-portrait is a great portrait) and yet his picture in this exhibition, "The Shower," isn't about anything.

There are some painters with religious feeling. Among these Millard Sheets is outstanding. We must mention Lauren Ford's "La Sallette"; Samuel Rosenberg's "Israel" also has religious feeling, although perhaps unintentionally. In any case it is done in the manner of Georges Rouault. (Rouault is very much felt in this exhibition, his jewel tones appear here, there and everywhere in the oddest places, but Rosenberg is apparently his disciple.)

War pictures are scarce. One is very fine; "Pacific Landscape," by Ben Shahn, is a beach made up of strange little varicolored stones. The stones or shells are precisely painted and there are so many of them the eye tires. Portraits are plentiful for this kind of exhibition. Franklin Watkins's "J. Stogdell Stokes" is excellent. Alexander James's "John Phillips Marquand" is very good. The first prize, "Sentimental Moment," by Philip Guston, is really a portrait, if by that is meant a picture whose main interest is the head. High spots of the exhibition for one observer are Jean Charlot's "Mystery Play," a Mexican scene done as usual in his individual, here-is-design manner, William Gropper's "Paul Bunyan" and Joe Jones's "Voyage Into the Unknown"—also Kunoyshi's beautiful, emotional "Motherhood."

KATHLEEN CASEY CRAIG.

THE ST. JOHN'S PLAN

Sacramento, Cal.

TO the Editors: Both Brother Theodore and Dr. Camp are associated with St. Mary's College in Moraga Valley where they helped introduce a form of the St. John's Plan. Their current disagreement (in your May 25th and October 5th issues) is interesting in the light of the modifications recently made in St. Mary's program. Furthermore, it is a question of importance to the whole of Catholic secondary education.

The crux of the disagreement seems to lie in the true nature of "dialectics." Brother Theodore seems to think, with Adler, that the "human intellect is infallible"—given freedom by the liberal arts. Dr. Camp, however, worries about "probable premises" and shies away from trusting any inherent teleology in dialectic processes. He would therefore give extra-dialectic *guidance* to the so-called seminar.

In view of the ideal proposed by the Plan—namely, the Socratic dialogues in which "guiding" is certainly evident—Dr. Camp seems to be correct. But the problem is very real: from the true nature of dialectics can we infer the need of external guidance or the need of greater freedom? Brother Theodore's preference for the latter

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sounds more consonant with human dignity, but Dr. Camp's preference for the former appears to me more epistemologically true.

BROTHER T. BRENDAN, FSC.

THE RETURNING SOLDIERS

Providence, R. I.

TO the Editors: There has been too much poppycock about the returning soldiers. But, when in your issue of September 21 you announced that C. G. Paulding would attack the touchy subject, we looked forward to the ensuing issue with the hope of reading something objective, something with a note of hope and promise.

We read all four pages of Paulding's amazing observations—in which he tactfully avoided the term GI—right to the end, including the very last sentence which told of escalators moving still soldiers up and down. Most enlightening! Then there was the paragraph, a cool and quenching paragraph, about tall cocktails and full course dinners and a play about which the writer and one Rosette Pennington were chatting before Rosette departed to wait on the tired soldiers who politely asked her for coffee and doughnuts, then thanked her for serving them because they recognized a kind deed, they were familiar with sacrifice and they were grateful for ostentations like Rosette's.

And while Miss Pennington, with the cocktail and the dinner warming her insides, warmed the insides of servicemen with simpler, more meaningful things like her smile, her talk, and her coffee and doughnuts, her companion of an hour ago, the illustrious Mr. Paulding, must have been considering the warped and unforgivable opinions that Rosette's customers were capable of harboring and passing on to the gullible public—opinions about the damn frogs and wops and limeys and a miserable, cheating, frowning, hating Europe. These from the soldiers who talk and talk too much. These from the soldiers, perhaps, who slept in mire for months; who nourished from packaged, powdered food; who shot at anybody who wore the enemy's uniform; who took shots back from the men in enemy's uniform; who had been spurred on months before by Europeans whose welfare was at stake; who had forgotten the quenching coolness of a long cocktail, the exquisiteness of New York restaurants and full course dinners, the stimulating quality of a fine play; who returned to the Europeans from the fight, perhaps, with shattered conceptions of what should be expected. Surely, there would be open arms for the battle-weary victors. Surely, in civilization they would find a girl's companionship, they could bring her something from a downtown shop in appreciation for her companionship, they could find a playground for their idle hours, for that's the way it used to be in America, and any history lessons that may have changed the soldiers' expectations had by this time been crowded from their minds by war-wrought thoughts, as had been lessons in algebra, geography and international relations.

Maybe these are not the soldiers whose talk Paulding frowns on and to which we must turn deaf ears. Is his soldier the guy who sat on his backside midst civilization galore from start to finish, then came home squawking? Who'd listen to him anyway? No, Mr. Paulding must be worried about the greater number of men who went through a great deal of suffering, sought a share of entertainment and relaxation when it was over, and came home to tell of their vain quest, to tell about the people they saw, their mannerisms, their attitude, their surroundings. People back home fired questions at them and they could only answer by what they saw.

No, we guess that US soldiers weren't so sweet to the Europeans. Hollywood must have led those people to expect different things from Americans—yes, Hollywood and History. But the uncouth soldiers cashed in on Black Markets, vomited on subways and made nuisances of themselves—some of the soldiers, some of the time. Meanwhile, British and French sailors were doing the same thing in our country. But there were such a few of them that we just felt sick for a minute, then forgot about it. These same sailors go back to native lands and tell things about America and Americans, things they have seen that may contradict history and tradition. We expect them to.

And another thing, the American press is more tolerant than those abroad. There were scores of accusations against Americans across—stories of rape and plunder—that were later proved entirely false.

Nearly all Americans talk too much—mostly truth, however. We would rather tear a page in the book of international relationship than to post warnings against the disillusioning chatter of returning soldiers.

WILLIAM A. MCNAMARA.

It never occurred to me to hope that returning soldiers ("spurred on months before by Europeans whose welfare was at stake") would escape meeting Americans who still can see no reason for their ever having left home. I am amazed, however, that they should find an American who thinks that the job of working from midnight to four in a railroad station canteen is an "ostentation" and a joke.—C. G. P.

The Stage & Screen

The Assassin

IRWIN SHAW'S picture of the Darlan murder, the fabulous Algerian scene, was seriously disappointing. The play's structure was weak: its action seemed to quarrel between reportage and the author's determination for a love story; and its people, while numerous, neither all carried the plot, nor all built into characters. It was sentimental. There is a question that gradual news-reports, material to which the dramatist could not have had access at his time of writing, have simply outdone him. Somehow or other, here, the gathered reality appears the better play.

I think not least among the evening's uncertainties will be the acting, which is not always just to the author's

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intentions. While it is gratifying that the producers, Carly Wharton and Martin Gabel, have discovered (or at least introduced) Frank Sundstrom, a well-known Swedish actor, to the street, I think they have cast him badly in this lead. By no imaginative stretch should this player be asked to interpret a twenty-year-old boy: the scheme is useful to no one. I think Mr. Sundstrom is an actor, having watched him build a chancy final scene into a moving one in this piece; but in all fairness, he should be assessed in something else. Lesley Woods, secondly important, is as strange a choice. Acknowldging her sincerity, she is somewhat over-intense, and, constrained by the stupidity of most of her lines, chooses to act beyond them. Also, her makeup is far too heavy. The rest are scattered; Harold Huber is as quietly threatening as usual as a Secret Policeman. At my time of writing, the producers have extended the run after a closing announcement. I think by the theatrically passionate the piece should be seen; but not by the eagerly hopeful. Mr. Shaw's next should now be their concern. (*At the National.*)

The Red Mill

I CANNOT agree with the dailies in their thin estimate of this Victor Herbert oldie. I liked the music, liked the costumes, found the whole business neat and fresh. *And* am dearly fond of Eddie Foy, Jr. I think this is an awfully good bet for any random children you may have to entertain, together with the millionly nostalgic. The latter are building a ticket-line right round 54th Street. (*At the Ziegfeld.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Puck Was Right

VERY often what makes one person laugh is not what makes another person laugh; something that sends me into stitches may leave you cold—or vice versa. I don't agree, however, that most American humor is of the banana-peel school, particularly in recent years when we're coming to appreciate shaggy-dog stories and the Thurber kind of joke. There's nothing by Thurber in the new comedies reviewed here, but some of them may have moments that will reward you with a chuckle.

When I saw *"Kiss and Tell"* on the stage a couple of years ago, I laughed and laughed; perhaps this was due to the relief of an air-cooled theater on a hot summer night, but more likely it was due to the fast pace of George Abbott's production which didn't allow a single moment for serious thought among the rapid-fire of wise-cracks and speedy action. The film version was directed by Richard Wallace and, moving more slowly than the play, gives one time to wonder occasionally what all the fuss is about. The script, written by F. Hugh Herbert who is also the author of the original, has been toned down somewhat, no doubt in deference to the Hayes Office. (It *was* the Hayes Office then; one of these days we may call it the Johnston Office—after Eric swings into action.) Its story still follows the main outlines of the play and shows how the younger generation could take care of itself if the older generation didn't interfere so much. The cards are stacked, however, so nothing is really proved. The feud between the two families starts when Mrs. Archer accuses Mrs. Pringle of negligence in bringing up her daughter because Mildred Pringle (Virginia Welles) *and* Corliss Archer (Shirley Temple) were caught selling kisses at a bazaar. The quarrel gets out of hand when the girls' fathers enter the fray and resort to fisticuffs. Corliss's brother, home on leave, thinks the feud is a lot of nonsense because he's in love with Mildred—so he marries her secretly. Sometime later, Corliss is seen leaving an obstetrician's office where she went with Mildred. Then the rumors fly. And Corliss, sworn to secrecy about her brother's marriage, admits that she is the one who is going to have a baby. Not only that—but she names the boy-next-door (played by Jerome Courtland as the most delightful and awkward seventeen-year-old since Tarkington gave us Willie Baxter). This situation winds up in a whirl of farce that becomes pretty silly at times mainly because the acting of the older folk is so exaggerated while the youngsters are so calm and cool about the whole thing. There are a few quite poignant moments in the scenes played by Shirley Temple and Katharine Alexander, as her mother. Miss Temple handles herself well; I am sorry though, now that she's a grown-up married woman, that she has to start right in playing the typical Hollywood heroine who lies her way out of every comedy mix-up.

The heroine (Susanna Foster) of *"That Night with You"* tells some fibs too, some that are really whoppers. Knowing that Renaud, the famous theatrical producer (Franchot Tone) had an early marriage annulled, she poses as his long lost daughter. "I'm the echo of a duet you sang twenty years ago," the imaginative girl says to the astounded producer who is a wolf on the prowl and accepts the situation with a gleam in his eye. Both the girl and Renaud have a real cause for surprise when his ex-wife turns up and admits the girl is their daughter. Then the bogus-mother and the bogus-daughter compete to play the lead in the bogus-father's new show. Complications are further involved by the girl's fiancé (David Bruce) who wants her to drop all this theatrical nonsense and marry him and have six children. But the girl has aspirations and dreams—which take the form of modernized scenes from grand opera. Susanna sings these well enough, but opera-lovers beware! Needless to say, this plot works overtime to be off color. Most of the episodes are more dull than risqué. The film's funniest and best moments are stolen by Louise Allbritton; as the producer's secretary and the only sane person in this contrived mêlée, she manages to put over some very wry remarks.

Matrimony seems to be getting pushed around in many ways this week. *"Love, Honor and Goodbye"* attempts to say a few words on the subject too; but its story is too fantastic to take any of our time—even on the second half of a double bill. When its heroine (Virginia Bruce), another panting stage-hopeful, disguises herself as a French governess so she can spy on her husband (Edward Ashley) the ultimate in contrived corn is reached. You don't have to wait around to learn that this comedy will never supplant "The Guardsman" in the Lunts' repertoire. You are likely to wonder, nevertheless, how such

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players as Helen Broderick, Victor McLaglen and Nils Asther got caught in this supporting cast. I can't answer the question. The times are indeed odd.

Even for those who like a banana-peel touch, I cannot recommend *"Bud Abbott and Lou Costello in Hollywood,"* which completely wastes the talents of two of the funniest comedians in the business. Although it has one scene that is a riot, showing Costello trying to put himself to sleep by playing a phonograph record for insomniacs, this hardly warrants your hanging around through a dreary plot and the inept fumbling at slapstick. What we need is a good laugh. I understand the French are having one now over an old Chaplin film, "The Gold Rush." The lucky French! PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

And the Bush Was Not Consumed

ANNE FREMANTLE

IN HER QUITE admirable critical study of Virginia Woolf* Joan Bennett sets out to discover how her subject "ordered her world." And in no novelist, except perhaps in Jane Austen, was the order, the form, so deliberate as in Virginia Woolf. The latter would have been delighted by Joan Bennett's essay: she had no use for reviewers; "a distracted tag on the tail of the political kite" was her own endorsement of Dickens's view that they were "the lice of literature." But she recommended just what Joan Bennett has done for her: a long, critical, serious survey: she suggested there should be "literary consultants," and wished they could exist during the writer's lifetime, to whom he or she might go for an hour's analysis, for a fee.

The problem, the question, as Joan Bennett sees it, is could Virginia Woolf create character? E. M. Forster, one of her greatest friends and admirers, said, only up to a point. She could give, he said, the "life-on-the-page: her characters never seem unreal, however slight or fantastic their lineaments, and they can be trusted to behave appropriately. Life eternal she could seldom give: so that is her problem." That is to say, Mrs. Dalloway is not as memorable as George Eliot's Dorothea Casaubon; or Rachel Vance as Jane Austen's Emma. Mrs. Bennett is inclined to agree with Mr. Forster. But not for his reasons. For him, Virginia Woolf was a poet, who wanted to write something as nearly like a novel as possible. For Mrs. Bennett, Virginia Woolf's characters are less sharply etched than, say, Jane Austen's, on purpose: because she saw that the Victorian technique of describing a person by what you, or their friends or enemies, saw of them led to the untruth of the magazine article as surely as Victorian painting, with its copybook realism, led to color-photography. Virginia Woolf herself clearly differentiates between poet and novelist and it is to be wondered how Mr. Forster so misjudged her: in her "Letter to a Young Poet" (John Lehmann) written in 1932 she says: "the poet is much less interested in what we have in common than in what he has apart." And for her, life was "not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end." It is the novelist's job to see clearly and to see whole, not the incident, but the incidence. The poet's vision is direct, the novelist's is oblique. "The only now," as she quotes Roger Fry calling reality, in her biography of him, is *both* continuous *and* momentary: "atoms danced apart and massed themselves, but how did they compose what people called a life?" she asks, and again "what is meant by 'reality'? It would seem to be something very erratic, very undependable, now to be found in the dusty road, now in a scrap of newspaper in the street, now a daffodil in the sun, but whatever it touches, it fixes and makes permanent."

Mrs. Bennett goes through the eight novels (each is a love-story, she reminds us) very carefully, discussing first the characters, then the plots, then the morals and values, and lastly their form. For summing up she discusses Virginia Woolf's last posthumous novel "Between the Acts"—in many ways the most successful thing she ever wrote. Mrs. Bennett gives long and admirably chosen quotation to illustrate her every point—just as an anthology of "best bits" this would be a lovely book to keep, apart from the excellent critical work—but she says nothing—or very little—of Virginia Woolf as critic, essayist, biographer, fighting feminist or enchanting and rarely beautiful human being, and she was all these too. Her biographies: "Orlando" the story of an imaginary Elizabethan who lives more than 300 years, becomes a woman in the eighteenth century, and is him/herself both English domestic social history and Vita Sackville-West (Mrs. Harold Nicholson), is one of those unique "conceits" that is entirely successful. "Flush," the biography of the Brownings' spaniel, though slighter, is no less perfect. Her "Roger Fry" is less unique, because she keeps her imaginative vision on almost too tight a rein: it is so much Roger Fry's life that it is a little less a work of genius. You feel that had Virginia Woolf fashioned Mr. Fry's life instead of only writing it the result would have been more truly artistic. The First and the Second "Common Reader"—collections of essays written originally for the (London) *Times Literary Supplement* (to which she contributed from the age of 24 to the end of her life) are not only a magnificent critique of English literature, but are themselves literature.

★

What of Virginia Woolf herself? "Perhaps there's I at the middle of it," one of her characters wonders, "a knot, a center." E. M. Forster describes her best, disposing forever of the Invalid of Bloomsbury myth "guilelessly accepted," as he says, "by Arnold Bennett. She was tough," he declares, "sensitive but tough."

She was born in 1882, the daughter of Leslie Stephen, author of some thirty volumes of biography and essays,

*Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist. Joan Bennett. Harcourt. $2.00.

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the original compiler of the "Dictionary of National Biography"; a man of great learning and tremendous character—he gave up his professorship at Cambridge because he would not accept the Thirty-Nine Articles. As a child, Virginia was dandled on every literary knee in London; kissed by "awful distinguished old men." Her father's first wife was the daughter of Thackeray; his second, a widow with three children, had four more, who grew up with her first brood, so Virginia was brought up with lots of brothers and sisters in a warm intelligent family. She luckily escaped all formal education; her father's library was hers to browse in, her father's brains and those of his friends hers for the picking. The Stephenses lived in London and in Cornwall, where they went every summer for 13 years. Virginia Woolf set all her novels in London or by the sea: city streets and sounds; sea sound and color, are her backgrounds, always. The Stephens were well off, and Virginia all her life had a private income, and rejoiced in it. Her means "substituted for the large and imposing figure of a gentleman which Milton recommended for my perpetual adoration, a view of the open sky." Her mother died when she was only 13. George Meredith had said of her: "I never reverenced a woman more." In 1904, when Virginia was 22, her father also died, and she and her two brothers and sister Vanessa took a house together in Bloomsbury, where Virginia began to write, Vanessa to paint. The next ten years were ideally happy: everyone who wrote or painted came to their house; Virginia was lovely and, though delicate, intensely able to enjoy life. She was a romp, a hoyden, mischievous, with an appetite for sensation that had an Elizabethan coarseness and comprehensiveness. "She . . . could disguise herself as a member of the suite of the Sultan of Zanzibar, or black her face and go aboard a dreadnought as an Ethiopian." She was "saved from preciousness by her sense of fun": sometimes, indeed, Mr. Forster says "she could scarcely see the busts for the moustaches she pencilled on them." Also her appetite included food: no one has so described meals (except, perhaps, Mrs. Sherwood, the admirable author of "The Fairchild Family"), she had an enlightened greediness gentlemen themselves might envy. Her laughter is always at simple things: the gelded cat in "Jacob's Room" that vicariously suggests to its owner the curate whose proposal she has just refused; Mrs. Oliver's ridiculous feelings for the gentleman farmer: if love was for Virginia Woolf the most significant thing in life, sex was the funniest. She was never shocked, and rarely bored—though she suffered fools, not gladly but not at all.

In 1912 she married Leonard Woolf. He had been in the Ceylon Civil Service; had written a remarkable novel, "The Village in the Jungle," his interests were politics and music, and inevitably he drew her into his world. Together they started the Hogarth Press; Leonard wrote books of economics, was earnestly "Left," but encouraged and inspired Virginia, and took the most wonderful care of her. It was a perfect union, and each one of her novels is, in its sensitive awareness of marriage, a tribute to her husband. By all the tokens, as Mr. Daiches pointed out, "the marriage of a man of talent and a woman of genius should have been a failure." But never was there a more complete success.

In 1915 Virginia produced her first novel, "The Voyage Out." During the war she had a mental breakdown, but recovered, and in 1919 her second novel appeared, "Night and Day"—her least successful, for she is half-imitating Jane Austen in it: it is almost as though she had been a little afraid of her own vision, recorded in "The Voyage Out," and were trying to prove to herself, life is not like that, it's really quite tidy and orderly; it's not an infinite series of dots, from which, Seurat-like, I must make a picture; not a Morse code which I must translate and transpose to a stave in human octaves. But she knew that, however slightly in "Night and Day," she was cheating. And for her, the whole duty of the writer is truth. For the average man, goodness; for the artist, beauty; but for the writer, truth is the one thing necessary. By his single-minded adherence to truth only will the writer be judged. Le mot *juste;* that is what the hard, gemlike flame must be harnessed to forge. In her conversation about Walter Sickert (a "Hogarth Letter" printed in 1934) she writes "the novelist after all wants to make us see. The novelist is always saying to himself, how can I bring the sun onto my page? How can I show the night and the moon rising? And he must often think that to describe a scene is the worst way to show it. It must be done with one word, or with one word in skilful contrast with another." So in 1922, with "Jacob's Room" she returns to her earlier technique, and, indeed, proceeds to experiment and to advance further, from where she had left off.

Attempts have been made to show she was influenced by Bergson: some foreign admirers will have it that she was forever listening to "the uninterrupted melody of our interior life." But whilst, for her great contemporaries, E. M. Forster and James Joyce, both temporarily and experimentally, man's life is "part of the universal process of which stars and quanta are as much part as we"; and they "see the stars shining on the brightest day," Virginia Woolf never for an instance suffers from their Manichaeanism. For them, night and day, the stars and the quanta, good and evil, are, if not opposite, at least alternate. For Virginia Woolf there is no succession, only simultaneity. Septimus Warren Smith's suicide and Mrs. Dalloway's ecstasy on the top of a bus are not antitheses; for what Virginia Woolf hears ever at her back is not a counterpoint, but the same tune, or snatches of the same tune, now played on the fiddles, now pompously given by the horn, now growled on the double-bass. In "War and Peace," Natasha's perfect day is unique, phantastical: nothing like it has ever happened before: it is frozen music. Cassandra's joy (in "Night and Day") at her dull dinner-party does not make the dullness of the dinner-party less real: it is related to it, part of a whole of which the dinner-party itself is also part. For the "uninterrupted melody" does not exist for Virginia Woolf: it is forever interrupted, now tangled into life exterior, now wholly underground. The danger in this way of writing novels is shown in "The Waves"

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where the six characters seem almost the different parts of a single person. Yet they do not conduct an internal monologue—they are more like the characters in Pirandello's play: conscious, subconscious, animal and rational man conducting a conversation.

★

My name is legion, Virginia Woolf says over and over: as I ladle soup, now I reverence my husband more than any man living, now I hate him and cannot imagine how I can bear him to touch me. Is there anybody there? she queries; is Mrs. Swithin watching mastodons graze (in the beginning of "Between the Acts") the same as Mrs. Swithin whom Grace the maid sees, "like any other old lady with a high nose, thin cheeks, a ring on her finger, and the usual trappings of rather shabby but gallant old age?" And the answer is yes, this very complexity is proof of the uniqueness; something simpler—something even as complex as ant or eel—could, in its structural simplicity, lack a knot, a center. But Mrs. Manresa, even, simple though she is, is there, is herself, and how much more Mrs. Dalloway, or Mrs. Ramsay.

"Our debt to her," Mr. Forster says of Virginia Woolf, is "that she reminds us of the importance of sensation in an age which practices brutality and recommends ideals." For her, sensation *was* reality; she knew and recognized as real only what she had experimented. She knew, by sensation, those South American insects "all eyes, the body a tuft of feathers serving merely to connect the two great chambers of vision . . . the insects are attached to cactuses; they drink crimson until they become crimson"; true, she can know "how cold the feet of insects must feel"; she fills her books with colors; the sea-colors green and blue "shine through her work, as white and crimson through the Brontës."

But it is always sensation, not emotion. She watches, she feels, the fire is in her and around, but the bush is not consumed. In her writing, everything else is: she herself has stated "when philosophy is not consumed in a novel, when we can underline this phrase with a pencil, and cut out that exhortation with a pair of scissors and paste the whole into a system, it is safe to say that there is something wrong with the philosophy or with the novel or with both."

This lack of emotion is the clue to her social philosophy—in other words, to her snobbishness. She was fortunately removed, by her always delicate health, from the double life lived by, for example Mr. Yeats, who became an Irish Senator, or Mr. T. S. Eliot who is a church warden and a civil servant as well as poet and writer. She frankly disliked the lower classes. In her introduction to a collection of letters from working women and men, she writes:

> Crime and poverty had none of the attraction for the Elizabethans that they have for us. They had none of our modern shame of book-learning, none of our belief that to be born the son of a butcher is a blessing, and to be unable to read a virtue. It is much better to be a lady. Ladies desire Mozart and Einstein—that is, they desire things that are ends, not things that are means. All these questions—questions of sanitation and education, this demand for the extra shilling, for another year at school, for eight hours instead of nine behind a counter or in a mill, leave me, in my own blood and bone, untouched. If every reform they demand was granted this very instant, it would not touch one hair of my comfortable capitalistic head. Hence my interest is purely altruistic, it is thin spread and moon colored.

It was her terrific honesty made her write this. Because she had no *sensation* of poverty, could not feel what it was like to lean over a sink, or "cook whatever meat a miner eats"; because she did not know the liver from the lights, she would not pretend. This *may* be a good brand of experience, but I myself haven't tried it, she tells her readers as a good grocer with a strange can. Thus also, there are no babies in her books—children in perambulators, pushed by nurses, yes: but the constant leaking at both ends, the smells and the stickiness, the enema and the ear-ache of the infant are absent.

Richard Dalloway's sermon to Rachel on "The Voyage Out" sounds priggish. "Owing to me," he boasts, "some thousands of girls in Lancashire can spend an hour every day in the open air which their mothers had to spend over their looms. I'm prouder of that . . . than of writing Keats and Shelley," and in Rachel's reaction: "it became painful . . . to be one of those who write Keats and Shelley" there is perhaps a hint of conscience: perhaps Leonard felt a little more like Richard and Mrs. Woolf was putting his point of view? Anyway, she escapes into feminism. "This tragic male-made mess" she called society, and washed her hands of it.

Such an attitude came, at least in part, from her lack of religion. She was "raised" in unbelief and remained always a very complete agnostic. Ethics of any sort are a poor substitute for charity: if we are not members of Christ, there *is* really no reason to bother with the underwashed, the underprivileged, the smelly. There is no point in taking up an unrelated cross, and, unless blood is becoming, why wear thorns? Goethe's theory, that blood is an excellent alternative to ink, she would have thought distasteful.

Appetite, interest, integrity—these she had to a degree few human beings, and even fewer writers, have had. She really loved the sensation of writing and enjoyed her work singlemindedly. Yet she had a tremendous sense of death. Only in "Orlando" and in "Night and Day" is death excluded. "Of death and death and death—still I danced forward," she quotes, and again, her appetite, her non-Manichaean gusto, enabled her to assimilate and to accept it. She imposes her order on it also; perhaps, in a way, she feels it less hard to pattern than life, though how fiercely she, like Sir John Falstaff, was for life, and against death, is shown, for example, in her description of Roger Fry's joy that he had survived the war. As Mrs. Bennett points out, every novelist has his own particular symbols, counters he uses for coins, and whilst E. M. Forster uses death—particularly sudden death—Virginia Woolf uses waves, and years, and colors, life-symbols, recurring factors, rather than occurring ones.

In 1941 Virginia Woolf had finished "Between the Acts." She was living with Leonard in a cottage on the South Downs, for their London house and library had

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been utterly destroyed by bombs. Here in the country too, bombs constantly fell; German planes flew over the Woolf's cottage on their way to London. One day, late in March, Virginia walked across the downs to the River Ouse, and did not return. She left two notes, for her husband and her sister Vanessa, in which she said she was certain she was going mad again, and this time would not recover.

In her "experimental humanism" she used the novel as an extension of consciousness, as others have used religion or poetry. She was tremendously successful, because, like the French cook, she took very limited materials—limited settings, a few often repeated characters, very small sections of time or action—and cooked them superbly. Other authors have used the methods of the English kitchen—Tolstoi and Hardy spring immediately to mind—where a great many superlative primary ingredients are used—dozens of eggs, sirloins of beef, the best butter, and the result, at least in part, is due to Napoleon or to Suttons Mammoth Peas. Mr. Forster ended his account of Virginia Woolf by conceiving of her works as a row of little silver cups gleaming and inscribed; "these trophies were won by the mind from matter, its enemy and its friend." Mrs. Bennett concludes her book with the words: "at the heart . . . lie the ageless paradoxes: man's insatiable thirst for the ideal and his constant preoccupation with the trivial: the 'dateless limit of human history' and the 'brief candle' of an individual life."

Corporatism

GEORGE G. HIGGINS

THE MAJORITY of those who criticize the Wagner Act are basically anti-union at heart. Not so Mr. Bernard H. Fitzpatrick, whose incisive study* of labor relations and the labor movement will inevitably provoke widespread and earnest discussion, if not among the labor "skates," certainly among the "doctors."

For fear of spreading myself too thin in a discussion of all of Mr. Fitzpatrick's controversial opinions, I propose to raise some rather fundamental, if tentative, questions about what is probably, in reality, only an *obiter dictum*—his passing treatment of the "Corporate State" and, more specifically, his references to *Quadragesimo Anno*.

Conscious of the dangers of over-simplification, I should say that Mr. Fitzpatrick's central thesis is that "the adoption of the elective principle as embodied in the Wagner Act" precludes the establishment in the United States of what he calls the corporate state. And why? Because the "elective principle" has undermined "monopoly" unionism and has tended inevitably to replace it with "introvert" ("one-plant") unionism. "It is perfectly obvious," he continues, "that the one-plant union is incompatible with corporatism; it destroys the industry-wide labor representation which is one of the two cornerstones of corporatism," monopoly unionism being the other cornerstone. He concludes rather dogmatically, therefore, that "the indicated first move of those who espouse corporatism is, thus, the repeal of the Wagner Act, the Railway Labor Act, and all legislation enacting freedom of choice into our law." Mr. Fitzpatrick is not expressing at this point his own opinion on the merits of this type of legislation. He is merely stating for the benefit of the proponents of corporatism what he conceives to be their only alternatives.

Since I am not a proponent of corporatism, I am not concerned with the soundness of his premises or with the validity of his conclusion. For the purposes of this review, his very provocative opinions on this admittedly important subject are beside the point.

But since I am perforce a proponent of the occupational group system of Pope Pius XI (variously referred to as the vocational group plan or the industries and professions system), of necessity I feel compelled to question Mr. Fitzpatrick's interpretation of *Quadragesimo Anno,* the document in which that program is advanced. My task is made the more difficult by the bothersome ambiguity of the author's references to the teaching of Pius XI. What I say, therefore, in criticism of his remarks is admittedly subject to correction.

The basic fallacy of Mr. Fitzpatrick's treatments of *Quadragesimo Anno,* it seems to me, is his failure to distinguish between Pius XI's occupational group system as such and the fascist parody on that system which is explicitly, if politely, condemned in those very passages of the encyclical which Mr. Fitzpatrick quotes. Mr. Fitzpatrick has made the same mistake which other commentators on *Quadragesimo Anno* have made before him. He has made the mistake of accepting Pius XI's derogatory description of Italian corporatism as an adequate description of the occupational group system as such. I am led to this conclusion, not so much by the fact that he quotes exclusively from those passages in the encyclical in which the Pontiff criticizes the fascist parody, but rather by the fact that he implies that a certain "school of interpretation of *Quadragesimo Anno*" in the United States is endeavoring (ineffectively, to be sure, he adds) to apply the essence of those passages to American economic life.

I think I know the "school of interpretation" to which he is referring. Presumably it would include among its more prominent members the late Monsignor John A. Ryan, Bishop Haas, and Father Raymond McGowan, not to mention a dozen others. I cannot speak officially for this so-called "school" of thought, but I can point out with absolute certainty that Mr. Fitzpatrick misunderstands and misstates their position. He leaves the impression—at least with the present writers—that these men are hoping to establish "corporatism" in the United States. I need not reply to this allegation in detail, for several members of the above-mentioned group have specifically answered such objections in their own writings. I refer in passing to Monsignor Ryan's relevant criticism of the corporate state. "The principal evil features"

*Understanding Labor. Bernard H. Fitzpatrick. McGraw. $2.00.

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of the fascist economic system, he wrote in 1935, are as follows: "the doctrine of the absolute, omnipotent and totalitarian State, existing primarily for its own sake, not for the welfare of its own members; the almost complete exclusion of the democratic principle, particularly in the requirements that there shall be only one recognized labor union, only one that can be of any service to the workers, that the Government shall select the leaders and officers of the unions and that the workers must never declare a strike; finally the complete domination of the Syndicates and the econmic life of the country by the Government."

Mr. Fitzpatrick, to be sure, concedes that some of the members of this "school" . . . "are impressed by the two warnings of Pius XI in connection with the corporative scheme—the tendency to suppress private initiative and the tendency to bureaucracy, and their impressions are fortified by the Italian experience." But even in this passage he continues to imply—to the best of my understanding of his words—that they are hoping to graft a modified form of corporatism upon the American economic system. "Therefore," he continues, "they are driven to the unreasonable doctrine which attempts to support a monopoly on the basis of employee choice." And to add to the reader's confusion, he gratuitously asserts more than once that the objective of the NRA (which Act was supported with significant qualifications by the above-mentioned "school") was to apply to American economic life the very system which is condemned by Pius XI in his discussion of Italian corporatism.

The net effect of Mr. Fitzpatrick's regrettably incomplete discussion of this important subject is bound to be bad. For the impression is left that not only corporatism but the occupational group system as well are impracticable in the United States—at least until we have repealed "the Wagner Act, the Railway Labor Act, and all legislation enacting freedom of choice into our law." Corporatism, yes. Impracticable and inherently vicious. But Mr. Fitzpatrick should have made it clear that what Pius XI and his American Catholic commentators have been discussing is not corporatism, but a thoroughly democratic and organically organized system of economic life. They have discussed the former only to reject it. To fail to underscore this fact is not only to miss the point of the encyclical but possibly to place even further obstacles in the way of its fulfillment.

Clearly aside from what I conceive to be a basic misinterpretation of *Quadragesimo Anno*—or at least of the position of some of the more authoritative American commentators on the encyclical—I have serious doubts about some of Mr. Fitzpatrick's other conclusions, which are, in turn, the premises to his principal conclusion on the impracticability of corporatism. I question, for example, his opinion that the Wagner Act by introducing the "elective principle" into unionism, has destroyed industry-wide labor representation. If anything, the Wagner Act would seem to have hastened the gradual acceptance of industry-wide representation and industry-wide bargaining. And if the so-called "introvert" ("one-plant") unions of the CIO have been content for the

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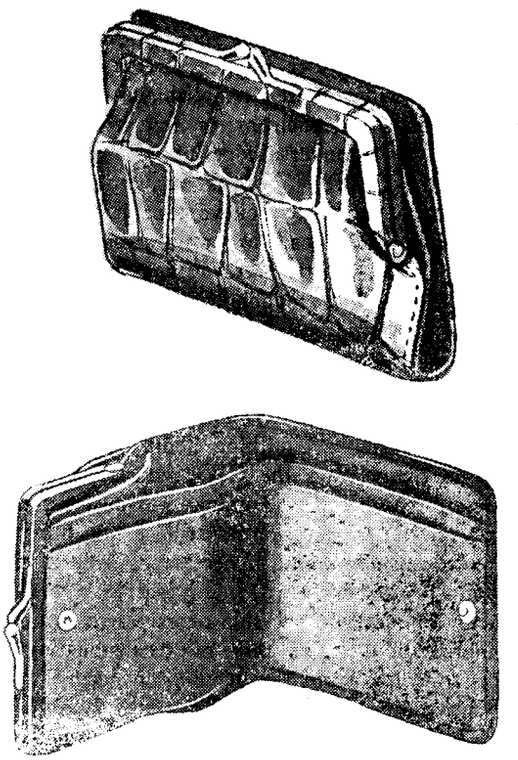

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time with less than that broad type of bargaining, the explanation is to be found in the stark facts of American economic life. The opposition of American industry, rather than the inner logic of the Wagner Act, provides the basic explanation. I take it, for example, that Walter Reuther of the UAW-CIO is speaking for the CIO in general when in a very recent pamphlet he again strongly advocates the immediate establishment of "industry [-wide] councils" in each major industry to solve the problems of the reconversion period and to plan intelligently for the future. This is authentic CIO policy, and I, for one, refuse to believe that it's merely paper talk in which CIO locals are uninterested.

I wonder, too, about Mr. Fitzpatrick's unqualified opinion that absolute monopoly in unionism in trade associations is a *sine qua non* of the Papal plan. Admittedly it's an essential feature of Italian corporatism, but I must insist again that American Catholic commentators on *Quadragesimo Anno* are not talking about corporatism. They are talking about something which parallels in many ways the CIO industry council plan. The presence of competing unions obviously complicates the problem, but federation is still a possibility which ought to be considered and, if necessary, given a trial.

Thought-provoking as Mr. Fitzpatrick's book is, it sins, in my opinion, on the side of excessive legalism and over-simplification. The task of reconstructing American economic life from the ground up according to the general principles of Pius XI's proposed system is complicated in the extreme and will not be rendered any less difficult by an either or approach. If it comes, it will come only gradually and by dint of a rather pragmatic type of experimentation. The important thing is to make an honest start. If we don't, our only possible hope is to continue to rely on imperfect substitutes such as the full employment bill—a bill which ought to be enacted into law at once in spite of the fact that it proposes to do what should be done (and can only be done effectively) by the organized and democratic cooperation of labor, industry, agriculture, and the professions, with the Government "directing, watching, urging, restraining, as occasion requires and necessity demands."

If we can't plan our economic life in this over-all, but decentralized and democratic manner without first repealing the Wagner Act, the country is headed for the dogs.

More Books of the Week

The Polish Worker. Felix Gross. Roy. $3.00.

THIS book is well written, well documented and partial. Probably it is the only study in English about the Polish workers and the Polish Labor Movement. The first part of the book deals with the social origin and structure of the Polish workers. For this writer the urban working class is the proletariat. In Poland the proletariat formed a differentiated stratum of various categories of workers who retained, despite wide economic and cultural differences, an intrinsic unity. It is interesting to learn from this book how much better off were the Polish workers by comparison with the Soviet Russian, the Hungarian and the Yugoslav workers. But if better off, they were never very far from hunger and never near social security. By a comparison of budgets the Polish workers' standard of living was very low.

The author presents evidence that the labor legislation of Poland, since the beginning of the twentieth century, was remarkably enlightened and humane. A very interesting section of the volume is devoted to a record of the Polish workers' thoughts about himself as set out in social memoirs. Allowances must be made here for obvious editing and coaching. What the real worker has to say about himself, in any language, in any land, is almost wordless. The glib worker is seldom callous-handed.

The final section of the book is a study of the Polish proletariat in its European framework. The historical facts presented are disappointingly meager and doctrinaire. As usual the Socialist philosophy of history screens out as useless and reactionary all human activities not infra-red. This makes the record simple, the author says it is sociological; certainly it is not history.

The story of the underground struggle against the nazi in Warsaw is documented from Socialist sources. It gives great and deserved praise to the soldier of the Ghetto, to the Socialists, and to no others. That is ungenerous and untrue. The author in a remarkable mood of dispassion says of the Soviet betrayal of besieged Warsaw: "The fact remains that no help came to the insurgents from the Soviet army at the crucial moment. The Soviet army might have suffered reverses or changed its plan of strategy which would justify their course of action."

It is to be hoped that this valuable partial record of the Polish workers will be completed by someone soon, preferably a Pole without social or national myopia.

JOHN MONAGHAN.

My Felicia. Paul Driscoll. Macmillan. $2.00.

HERE is a first novel possessing a certain freshness and distinction. Freshness because it deals with a relatively unexplored area of our life, the area of Polish immigrants and their American-born children. Distinction because it handles this material with sureness and sensitiveness. One wishes as much could be said for the rest of the book, which groans audibly at the joints. The plot is commonplace. Felicia, all-too-utterly-perfect child of Polish millhand parents in, one suspects, New Bedford, Massachusetts, attracts and is attracted by the son of an old whaling and mill-owning family. All the usual problems are paraded for our tears, but the disappearance of the Standler fortune in the thirties and the suicide of Standler papa clears away all remaining barriers —the barrier of the "suitable" girl having been removed by making her into a nymphomaniac who runs away with a "greater love hath no man" Standler cousin from the noble west, whose entire motive is to clear the ground for Felicia. There's a side-plot, too, in the person of the most nastily-drawn Irish lad I've had the pleasure of meeting since I last read "Ulysses." This O'Mara has every Irish vice with not a single Irish virtue. He is, as the boys say, strictly from hunger, and one suspects a bit of malice on Mr. Driscoll's part despite Mr. Driscoll's name.

But when Mr. Driscoll is dealing with his Poles he is on firm ground. Felicia's mother and father are to the life, and deftly. Her neighbors, her street are living

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things, with acts and emotions finely suited. Here the author moves freely and at ease, knowing his values as he never knows them at Harvard or among the Standlers. Moreover in the Polish setting Mr. Driscoll weaves his social commentary into his action, as he does not do elsewhere. And to show how good he can be at his best, I am quoting a page or two of such matter. "Anzelm" is a Polish relative come to America for a visit during the worst of the depression:

"And what about New York, Anzelm?"

He shook his head solemnly: "I have seen Cracow and Warsaw, and Hamburg and Cherbourg too. But ah, they are not your New York. The buildings, the streets—It is true what they say, this is the richest and greatest country."

Everyone nodded happily.

"And the train, such a train—such a rich railroad, this New York, New Hartford—"

"New York, New Haven and Hartford, Anzelm."

"Yes. Such a fine ride—I had the car nearly to myself. But there was a thing," said Uncle Anzelm.

"Yes?"

"From the window I often saw huts—perhaps an acre of them, made of old boards, tin roofs, tar paper, with crazy chimneys and the smoke coming out."

"Oh, those were Hoovervilles."

"Were—?"

"Hoovervilles. There is no word for them in Polish. Men without jobs have sometimes no other places to live."

"These men, they do not care for jobs?"

"No, no, Anzelm. There's no place for them to work."

"But"—Anzelm's dark eyes flashed—"I saw from the train a place called, I think, Breedgeport, and looking in I saw the empty factories and the machines. Surely that was a place to work?"

"No, because the owners of the factories can't pay them for working there. If they did work, and made things with the machines, no one would buy the things."

"No one has need of them?"

"No—it's just that they haven't money to buy, because they're out of work."

"I see." said Uncle Anzelm. It was clear he didn't see, and Felicia could almost feel the old folks squirming, anxious to ask their questions about the old country. Over in a corner Joan was holding hands with Phil Kuznicki, and Joan seemed gigglier than ever.

"These men in the huts," Uncle Anzelm asked, "what do they eat?"

"Food they beg, or steal from garbage cans. Some try to grow crops but the soil is poor."

Uncle Anzelm looked startled. "Then you have here a famine."

"No, no—the crops are good."

"But—"

"In fact," Mr. Sikorski said, "the farmers have raised so much the government has had to buy some of it from them. I was reading in the paper—the English paper—" he added, with a touch of pride, "the government has two hundred million bushels of wheat it doesn't know what to do with."

"Then," his brother demanded, "why doesn't the government give it to these people?"

Mr. Sikorski shrugged. In the momentary silence, even now, Felicia thought she heard Joan Urban giggle. "They say it would be bad for the people. If you give the people food or money it will destroy their—what do they say?—their morale. The government has lent many million dollars to banks and railroads but they are different, they have no morale to be destroyed as people have."

"Their morale will be destroyed if their bellies are full?"

Mr. Sikorski shrugged. "That is why is said."

"I do not understand." Uncle Anzelm frowned despond-

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November brings to mind once more the most salutary thought, to pray for the poor souls in Purgatory. November, with its dull skies and drifting leaves, is the best month of the year for this commemoration. We are sure, with the assurance of faith, that our prayers can help those poor spirits, "confined to waste in fires, until the foul crimes, done in their days on earth, are burnt and purged away"!

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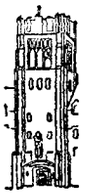

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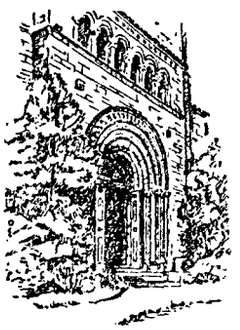

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ently. "I have been to school but I do not understand half what you tell me. You say your great government will not give the people wheat but in my time, in the old country, I heard of your government giving much food to the poor people of Europe. This was done by a man named Hoover."

"He is now head of the government."

"It was because of this," Anzelm said, "that in those days we thought—you know; some of you were there—we thought this the greatest, richest land on earth. The land of the opportunity, we called it, and was the place where people were wiser than anywhere. Were we wrong—or has it changed?"

No one answered him. They sat silent, waiting for him to go on.

Dialogue of such quality, it seems to me, makes Mr. Driscoll worth watching despite the awkwardness of much of "My Felicia."

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

Daisy Kenyon. Elizabeth Janeway. Doubleday. $2.50.

ABOUT with Miss Janeway's "The Walsh Girls" was quite sufficient to establish the fact that here was a new writer with a talent for making people as unpleasant and as unhappy as can be. She is pitiless in her dissection. She gives vent to that decided talent in her latest. Daisy Kenyon is first of all the mistress of a ruthless Park Avenue Irish-American *paterfamilias,* secondarily a commercial artist with a flat in Greenwich Village. She finally achieves a sort of salvation with the art editor of a women's magazine who first was all broken glass inside because he had allowed his wife to take the wheel on a rainy night with fatal results. The one note of hope is the love he and Daisy come to have for each other, even though he is drafted soon after their marriage. But meanwhile the Park Avenue "heavy" gets all broken up by his failure to land a mammoth plane motor contract in Washington; he goes berserk in Daisy's apartment. Daisy herself then almost goes permanently to pieces. All this in a torrent of Scotch and sodas, Pernods and a tough way of talking that seems genuinely in keeping. There is no mistaking the atmosphere. So much so that one unspeakable reference to Our Lord is completely unnecessary. Now and then her characters manifest a certain familiarity with sacred things, never their belief in them. Miss Janeway has the skills; she is sensitive to sights and sounds and smells; sparing in word; though not graphic, extremely effective in her descriptions; dramatic; subtle; convincing. She has few rivals in depicting the depths of unhappiness with which her books are filled.

EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

CONTRIBUTORS

F. V. MORLEY is chief of the editorial staff of Harcourt Brace. His article is a portion of a book he has written, "My One Contribution to Chess," to be published approximately December 1 by B. W. Huebsch, at a probable price of $2.00.

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